

## **15 QUESTIONS ON RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES**

### **1. What is the classic scientific method?**

The classic scientific method, applied since at least the 17th century, is an empirical method of acquiring knowledge. It can be defined as a systematic approach designed to uncover truth and establish certain knowledge through the discovery of relationships between variables.

### **2. What are the seven basic steps of the scientific method**

1. Defining the problem or topic.
2. Reviewing existing literature.
3. Formulating a hypothesis (theoretical, hypothetical explanations of observations and measurements)
4. Selecting a research method.
5. Collecting data.
6. Analyzing results.
7. Drawing a conclusion.

**3. Should the researcher always formulate a hypothesis before collecting data?**

Not always, sometimes it is difficult in open ended-studies. The people in the study tend to suggest them. Sometimes initial hypotheses become irrelevant or inadequate after entering the field.

**4.What is the difference between the dependent variable and the independent variable?**

The independent variable is the one used in making the prediction, the dependent variable is the one being predicted.

The goal is to see if the independent variable affects the dependent variable).

**5. What is the population?**

The people, object or items to be studied

**6. What is a sample?**

A representative part of a population

**7. In which research method does the researcher get directly involved in the social behavior under study, interacting with people in their natural settings?**

Participant observation

**8. What problem do experiments often have?**

The artificial quality of the setting is the main disadvantage of experiments  
Besides, it may be unethical or impractical to use human subjects.

**9. What does the placebo effect prove?**

The effects produced by a placebo cannot be attributed to the properties of the placebo itself but to the subject's belief in the treatment, which proves the importance of psychological aspects when conducting experiments.

**10. What is an observational study?**

It is a research method in which individuals or settings are observed but no attempt is made to affect the outcome, the researcher tries not to affect what occurs in the setting

**11. Why is different the information from a survey to that obtained in an interview?**

In a survey you collect standardized information from a random sample of the population

In an interview the information is open and free, like a conversation.

**12. What are the two main types of interviews?**

The one which follows a strict list of questions (structured interview) and the open-ended interview (semi-structured interview).

**13. Interviews are time-consuming and expensive because they only deal with a subject at a time. Why do researchers still use them?**

Because they provide in-depth information not obtainable by other methods.

**14. Why is sometimes difficult to participate and observe?**

The researcher has to balance both aspects, it is a dilemma. How much emphasis to put, sometimes it is impossible to do both.

**15. What ethic rules should be considered when conducting a research?**

1. Avoid harm to participant (psychological or physical)
2. Protect personal privacy. Respect confidentiality, especially when done without their knowledge. Use case numbers. We are dealing with people, not rats in a maze.
3. Obtain informed consent. Tell people what you will do.
4. Apply research ethically
5. Avoid deception in the course of research such as lying or giving false information to obtain information. Sometimes, researchers need to deceive the subjects because it is the only way to obtain valid information. In those cases, it is strongly advised to explain people afterwards why you did it.